

REMARKS

Examiner Clardy is thanked for his careful review of the present application and for his allowance of claims 19-21. For the reasons that follow, applicants respectfully submit that claims 14-18 also should be allowed.

The Present Invention

As defined in claims 14 and 16, the two independent claims that are subject to rejection, the invention is directed towards a method of inhibiting the preemergent growth of a plant and towards a method for preparing a preemergent herbicide, respectively. In claim 14, the claim method comprises introducing a growth inhibitor which comprises a lactic-acid-containing steep liquor to which additional lactic acid has been added. In claim 16, the claim method comprises adding additional lactic acid to a steep liquor.

Discussion of Claim Rejections

Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed invention should not be rejected as anticipated by or obvious over the Wright reference. Wright is directed towards a method and composition for soil stabilization, and in this respect does disclose that corn steep liquor may be added to soil. However, this reference does not, teach or suggest that a growth inhibitor that comprises a lactic-acid-containing steep liquor to which additional lactic acid has been added should be prepared or employed as a pre-emergent growth inhibitor. This aspect of the claimed invention is wholly absent from the reference, and, accordingly, the claim rejections are not well founded.

Other Matters

An Information Disclosure Statement is submitted herewith.

Applicants have not received a corrected filing receipt, as was previously requested. The original filing receipt erroneously had indicated that the present application was placed under a secrecy order. This was apparently the result of an error



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on the part of the Office; it is noted that the present application had already been published in the international stage. Applicants earlier requested a corrected filing receipt but have not received the same.

Finally, the office is respectfully requested to note a change in the correspondence address for the undersigned attorney. Please address future correspondence to

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Conclusion

Allowance is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: 1/5/07

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